

The Lions Roar



INDEPENDENCE

July 2006

Washington School for the Blind Foundation

By Angie Armstrong, Executive Director



DOLLARS IN ACTION!

The Washington School for the Blind Foundation hosted its 2nd annual Benefit Dinner and Concert in the Historic Fries Auditorium at the Washington State School for the Blind June 25, 2006. Over 90 guests enjoyed a first class dinner donated by Beaches Restaurant; listened to music performances by 2005 Grammy Award Winning Acoustic Guitarist, Mark Hanson and Vocalist, Greta Pederson, former WSSB student Nick Baker and current student Vaughn Brown.

The Foundation is pleased to announce that over \$43,250.00 was donated through this event. A special thanks to our event underwriters: Beaches Restaurant, Hi-School Pharmacy, Bank of Clark County, and Ralph and Susan Gilbert; and also to our table sponsor/hosts Roy Brothers, Ray Hickey, Duane and Peggy Lansverk, Kim and Sue Logan, John and Nancy McKibbin, Northwest Lions Foundation for Sight & Hearing, Val and Dan Ogden, Sondra and Lee Powell, Joann Ruffini in memory of Alice Litchfield, Cherry and Ed Shaw, and Dean and Sue Stenehjem.

Proceeds from this event will be used to support WSBF projects, such as helping to provide tools, skills and Assistive Technology to Students. Vaughn Brown and 2001 WSSB alumni (and current graduate student at University of Arizona), Mai Nguyen, are two of those individuals who have accessed technology through the Foundation. At the Benefit Dinner and Concert they both did a terrific job in presenting their personal stories of how technology impacts their lives everyday. Here is an excerpt of Vaughn's speech:

My name is Vaughn Brown. It is my pleasure to share with you my experience with assistive technology. It all started when I was six months old...when it was discovered that I had hearing loss. Thanks to hearing aids, and later cochlear implants, I learned to listen and talk. Thank goodness because I am able to talk to you tonight. But I'm not here to talk about being deaf. I am here to talk about being blind and the technology available to make my life easier.

When it comes down to doing school work, I have very little excuse for not getting it done. Thanks (or perhaps, no thanks---just kidding!) to computer technology, I can produce work equal to my sighted

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Washington School for the Blind Foundation (continued)

By Angie Armstrong, Executive Director

peers. One of the tools that I use is called “Jaws for Windows.” It is a speech output program for my computer. “Jaws” reads the text off the screen so that I can do research on the internet, write in word processors, and print in both Braille and print formats. This enables visually impaired or blind people to attend school, hold jobs, produce quality work and compete with their sighted peers.

As students or job holders, note taking is an important skill. By using a variety of devices such as Voice Notes, Braille notes, lap tops and Pacmates, we can keep ourselves organized. Thanks to the Foundation, I have a Braille note. This device is similar to a portable computer. The Braille note has the capability to use word processors, internet, calculator, email, address book, and daily planner. I mainly use it for note taking. There are numerous other technologies which help blind and visually impaired persons. Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology is now being used to help us navigate the streets. In fact, I can plug it into my Braille note. Zoom Text and other programs enlarge text on the computer screen. Various scanners take printed words from paper to our computer screens.

By using these technologies, I have equal access and skills. Next year, I will be attending Clark College. Colleges are often challenging, but the difficulties of equal access are reduced by assistive technology, thus I am unafraid of facing academics. I will also continue studying Music Theory here at WSSB. I will expand my music composition skills to the computer through Braille Editor Kit. One of my other interests is natural horsemanship. I have met horse trainers at seminars, expos and via the internet. In July, I am attending a horse massage course. Since a lot of material will be covered, by using an accessible note taking device, I will be able to study and memorize muscles and massage moves.

I appreciate you attending this benefit tonight. I appreciate the Foundation which assisted me in purchasing this Braille Note that I am using to read this speech. You have just seen Foundation dollars in action.



WSSB Student
Vaughn Brown



From left to right: Nick Baker,
Greta Peterson, Mark Hanson
and Vaughn Brown



Susan Gilbert (left)
and Mai Nguyen



Effectively Utilizing a Digital Environment to Enhance Learning Opportunities

By Dr. Dean O. Stenehjem, Superintendent

In 2002 a task force was formed to explore the option of expanding educational classes and resource options for students, beginning with those students at the high school level. The task force was to examine how to more effectively utilize a digital environment in helping to reduce a widening educational divide among communities within the state of Washington by utilizing the tools and resources currently available and those that would be developed in the future. The task force recommended that Washington State design a digital education initiative that would meet the five following criteria:

- Impact the largest possible number of Washington State students, teachers and parents
- Offer more than just the online classes offered in many states
- Take advantage of the wealth of existing resources, both within Washington State and elsewhere
- Build a system with an eye on the future of education and technology
- Create a “Magnet of Innovation” that draws the best providers to Washington State

With this in mind a service called the Washington Digital Learning Commons (DLC) was formed as a 501(c)(3) to facilitate the goals of the task force. Initial funding for the projects was obtained from the Gates, Allen, and Hewlett Foundations as well as the State of Washington. Under the direction of Dr. Lewis Fox, Vice Provost for Educational Learning Technologies, University of Washington, the proof of concept pilot began the fall of 2003. Dr. Judy Margrath-Huge was hired as the new CEO of the DLC to provide leadership and direction for this new service. Of the original 18 schools, the Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) was instrumental in assisting the DLC in providing a focus on accessibility as the services were put into place.

The DLC has proven to be a highly successful program and has a goal of having this service available in every school in our state. At this time the services are primarily for high school age students, their teachers, and parents. Approximately 50,000 students in the state of Washington are now accessing the DLC and those schools which have become members have increased course offerings at the high school level by over 300 classes. What this has meant to WSSB is that as students enter and exit the on-campus program, the class options for students have increased tremendously. Even though WSSB has access to a large high school across the street and a community college that is likewise as close, the options and opportunities for students has been very important in helping students meet their needs and providing another avenue to learn. Access to the DLC has also helped accelerate our emphasis on digital learning options for students, has assisted in increasing staff's digital skills sets, and assisted with transition issues as students enter and exit back into their local school districts throughout our state.

WSSB is also offering its own online courses and has increased online services and training opportunities for those providing services to blind and visually impaired students in the Pacific Northwest. Beginning in the 2006-2007 school year, WSSB will begin offering the online class options to blind and visually impaired students throughout our state through Outreach Services. The DLC has opened the opportunities for other residential schools for the blind throughout our country to become members, which would allow them to access all the resources and class options for a very minimal fee. The contact person for this service is Dr. Judy Margrath-Huge, CEO of the DLC (206-543-8188) (jhuge@learningcommons.org).

Effectively Utilizing a Digital Environment to Enhance Learning Opportunities (continued)

The DLC has been a great resource to WSSB and we hope that this type of service option continues to grow and open up new avenues of learning for many more blind and visually impaired student from throughout the country. We are only limited by our own lack of imagination when it comes to what we can do to expand opportunities for students.

In closing, let me provide you with one of those golden opportunities that can happen:

Theresa Tate is just one of WSSB's teachers that have embraced the possibilities of digital learning. Last year she received training so she could teach an online course through the Virtual High School (VHS). This meant that she was now both a faculty member with us and the VHS. This not only opened up an additional class for 6 blind and visually impaired students on our campus, but also for students from throughout the U.S. (Actually, with digital learning we had no idea whether all the other students were disabled or not, disabilities become invisible!) Theresa's willingness to teach a class through the VHS opened up 10 slots at the VHS for other students from WSSB to take additional classes.

The message below is wonderful and really shows a student's view of what can happen within the digital environment. It also helps address and answer some of the concerns about isolation, teacher access, etc.

“Oh My Goodness!

This class was the best. It was a new experience, and definitely one I will never forget. I remember signing online the first day of school, and wondering what it would be like, and who these people are, that I will most likely never see in person. But now, I don't want to leave, because I love the supportive environment we have all created for each other. We each love the poetry we get to read, and responding to it is awesome, too.

I also loved the lessons. They were insightful and amusing. I have learned a lot more about my own writing styles and preferences than I thought that I would. I have written more different kinds of poetry than I probably would have, had I not taken this class.

This was such a positive experience for me, one that I will cherish and never forget. I hope that everyone tries hard to stay in touch, and never forgets that no matter what anyone says, the real poet lies on the inside, and what comes out is a mission from one's heart.”

Love you all! Lilly

For more information on digital learning go to www.wssb.wa.gov



WSSB Welcomes Sherry Hahn, Distance Learning Coordinator

WSSB is pleased to announce the hiring of Sherry Hahn as the new Distance Learning Coordinator. Sherry comes to us from the White Salmon School District where she was their District Technology Director. Sherry started with the district as a parent volunteer unpacking their brand new Apple IIe computers. With their support, she became a building technology coordinator and then District Technology Director. Sherry has worked in the education field for the past eighteen years and during that time earned her masters degree at Portland State University in curriculum and instruction.

Sherry provided the following information about her background in distance learning: "During my term as District Technology Director for White Salmon, I have been involved in digital learning both in taking classes and in supporting or providing classes. I completed a 30-week on-line curriculum in Geographical Information Systems (GIS) from the University of Montana. The district participated in a consortium, Washington Virtual Classroom Consortium, where we shared training and student presentations in a water quality project with nine other Washington State districts via video conferencing. I also participated in supporting a Career and Technical Education videoconference where a certified A+ and Net+ teacher in Quilliyute and a Cisco Networking certified teacher in White Salmon provided a daily conference that allowed students to gain skills in all three areas that led to college articulated classes. At one point, we had four school districts tuning in daily to provide this CTE classes to their students. I have supported our DLC (Digital Learning Commons) instructor and students to assure smooth delivery of classes in technical matters and troubleshooting."

"I am looking forward to developing close personal and professional relationships with the administrators and staff at WSSB to develop and enhance our digital learning environment".

Parent's Perspective

By Kathleen Lipiec Brown, Parent Representative

I am a world-renowned expert. As I look back on my son's 18 years, I am confident that I am the "expert" on Vaughn -- a position I have defended numerous times.

Once when at the age of 4 a world-renowned expert told us that Vaughn did not need a cochlear implant since he did "just fine" with hearing aids. (He now has bilateral cochlear implants.) A little later, when another world-renowned expert told us that our neighborhood school could meet Vaughn's needs and that he didn't need the School for the Blind. They were wrong. I was right. I was right because no one observed, monitored, analyzed, and lived with Vaughn's needs more than I did.

YOU ARE A WORLD-RENOVED EXPERT regarding your student. You know his or her strengths, weaknesses, talents, interests, and needs. But as an expert, we have to seek information, listen to other experts, and remain diligent in promoting the well being of our sons and daughters. WSSB has provided us with many expert consultants who have sometimes opened my eyes to issues, needs, and talents. WSSB has provided us with expert consultants to problem solve and pave our student's path to success. As world-renowned experts we have to listen, listen, listen.

My term as Parent Representative has ended so this will be my last. I have enjoyed this process of thinking, writing, and sharing with you. I am quite pleased that we have both a parent and grandparent interested in assuming the role of Parent Representative. Parents and grandparents are the experts of the world!

Thank you for the opportunity to be YOUR Parent Representative.



Education

By Craig Meador, Director On-Campus Programs

Another school year has come to an end. It is always a great time of celebration and anticipation as we review the past year and prepare for the new year to come. This past spring was filled with many highlights.

The Northwest Environmental Science Camp. This year we had 46 students attend this four day event on the Oregon Coast. The focus this year was clouds. Students were involved in numerous activities that examined the nature and structure of clouds, as well as the weather patterns associated with them. This is always a fantastic learning opportunity as students are immersed into an outdoor education setting that offers four distinct ecosystems and many recreational opportunities. The staff, led by Paul Baldwin, put together another fantastic program this Spring.

WSSB-Lions Annual Track Meet. 130 participants from Oregon, Washington and Idaho converged on WSSB this past May to participate in the annual track meet. Volunteers from the Lions Club sponsored this great event. Congratulations to all participants, we look forward to seeing you next year.

Prom: This year's prom was held at the Quay in Vancouver. It was a great venue that overlooked the Columbia River. The evening began with dining on local Northwest fare that included prime rib and salmon. Music was provided by DJ, Mark Stolle, it featured a collection of current and standard hits that kept the students on the dance floor the whole evening. It was truly a memorable evening.

All School Picnic and Awards Assembly: Parents, students, staff and friends gathered on June 8, to celebrate a great year at WSSB. Awards were presented in many categories that ranged the full gamut of activities at WSSB. Honor Roll and Principal Award winners were recognized and the winners of the Academic Awards were announced.

Middle School Honor Roll: Sarah Bair, Cameron Hedeem, Jacquelyn Patching, Tyler Shepard, Rachel Talley, Abby Traverse.

High School Honor Roll: Alyssa West, Sonja Steinbach, Vaughn Brown, Jacob Hendee, Randie Gustafson, Gail Duff, Jesse Curtis

Principal's Award: Jeff Barnes, Lark Braun, Alyssa Frohlich, David Hammond, Patrick Hari, Lisa Heberling, Jessica Petersen, Fred Ramirez

Academic Scholarship Winners: **Gold:** Sonja Steinbach, **Silver:** Vaughn Brown, and **Bronze:** Alyssa West

Graduation: "It's Finally Our Friday" was the theme of this year's graduation. Our commencement speaker was Chief Brian Martinek from the City of Vancouver's Police Department. His talk was both inspirational and humorous. He encouraged all of our graduates to carry the torch and be an example of WSSB as they move beyond this first step in their education. Seven graduates walked the stage this year. They are:



From left to right:
Jessica Petersen
Jon Miner
Nick Jones
Lisa Heberling
Randie Gustafson
Gail Duff
Sonja Steinbach (not pictured)



After School/Evening Programs

Social and Recreation Activities for 2005-2006: What a Year!

By Adrienne Stout, Recreation and Volunteer Coordinator



WSSB Student Cody Meyer demonstrating his rock-climbing skills

The 2005-06 school year has brought an ever-expanding array of social and recreation opportunities to students. Here, at a quick glance, is a sampling of the variety of programs and activities kids have been involved in both on and off-campus: yoga, tandem cycling, scuba diving, judo, golfing, rock-wall climbing, N.W Children's Theatre, Blazer games, bowling, hiking, swimming, skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, horseback riding, outings to Pearson Air Museum, David Garcia's Glass Studio for glass blowing, and Staver Locomotives. Kids were also treated to outstanding presentations by the Lewis and Clark Discovery Expedition, Rich Barrows on Cambodia and Thailand, Sarah Buttrell and Laurie Conyers (nurses at WSSB) on their trip to China, and nationally acclaimed Native American vocalist Karen Therese. Weekly campus visits by Dove Lewis Therapy Dogs, and monthly birthday celebrations round out events the students have enjoyed this year through WSSB's recreation program.



WSSB Student Bradley Andrews-McRobert

Our students have also joined forces with the Portland Youth Golf Association and the United States Blind Golf Association to learn the game of golf through the "First Tee Program" at Heron Lakes Golf Course on Tuesday afternoons. The "First Tee Life Skills Experience Program" focuses on nine core values of golf that can be/are incorporated into the lives of the golfer, e.g., sportsmanship, confidence, integrity, perseverance, respect, responsibility, judgment, courtesy, and honesty. The students are excited about their new-found love of golf and are looking forward to continuing their game in the fall.



WSSB Student Anthony Thomas and a WSSB volunteer

Wednesday afternoons throughout Spring have found our students at Royal Ridges. Our students were able to learn the first steps of enjoying the recreational activity of horseback riding. Carol Burris, intermittent RLC at WSSB, was instrumental in making this awesome activity a success. The students are looking forward to taking their beginning skills into the intermediate and advanced levels of horsemanship next year.

All and all, the students of WSSB have had a tremendous year of experiencing and enjoying the many recreational opportunities that living life in the Northwest provides to all of us. We are looking forward to the many adventures that are waiting for us in the years to come.

Tandem Cycling at WSSB

By Adrienne Stout, Recreation/Volunteer Coordinator



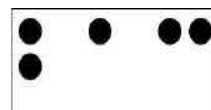
WSSB Student Cameron Hedeon with a member of the North River Racers heading out on their ride!

WSSB students and the North River Racers are celebrating our one year anniversary, and ending our third successful, exciting and adventurous season of community tandem cycling. Since last Spring our Thursday afternoon Tandem Cycling group has had 19 events. We have averaged over 9 student riders and 7 tandem captains per weekly ride with rides averaging 10 miles round trip. Some of the destinations have included: Water Resource Center, Farmers Market, Esther Short Park, Vancouver Lake, Fruit Valley Park, Leverich Park, Wintler Park, The oldest apple tree in the state of Washington, Burgerville, Dairy Queen and several community biking paths. We have had 41 different tandem riders (students) and 33 different captains in our 3 seasons. The North River Racers donated the proceeds of their Summer 2005 Courthouse Crit Race to the WSSB recreation fund. They also partnered with the Vancouver Police Department to provide each one of our students with a brand new helmet. With the money provided we were able to purchase new fluorescent vests with WSSB printed on the back. We were also able to purchase two new tandem bikes. Many students have never had the opportunity to ride a bike, but thanks to the volunteerism of the North River Racers and friends, the students are having the time of their lives every Thursday afternoon riding throughout our community. If you would like to volunteer as a tandem captain, please call Adrienne Stout at (360) 696-6321 extension 180.

IRC/BAC News

By Judi Sorter, Publications Specialist

BAC is an unfunded program supported by a fee-for-service



Changes, changes, changes! Spring is always a busy time for us, but this year was especially so. Our office assistant, Cynthia Marchese, moved to California when her husband got a new job, and boy we were sorry to see her go. She was fun to work with and did her job extremely well. So, we had to conduct a series of interviews to find a replacement. That took a while! But, success! Donna Martino has recently joined us and is doing a great job already. Donna and her husband came north from California a few years ago, and love the Northwest. Donna has had many diverse jobs, including working as a teacher, a math teacher no less, which is very valuable to the Braille Access Center due to the number of math books we transcribe. So, all you wonderful people enjoy your summer and think of us working hard and reading $4x+7y = (8x-4xy\dots)$.



The Washington School for the Blind Foundation can provide a student with screen enlarger software for \$500. Your participation in the Albertsons Community Partners is one way you can help.

It's so easy! Call (800) 696-6419 (Our Partner Number is 49000128008).



OUTREACH SERVICES

By Dee Amundsen, Director of Outreach

The Outreach Department continues to change and evolve as we work with districts to provide vision and orientation and mobility services. Part of this change includes a change of teachers within the department.

Betsy Wada has retired and her colleagues, children, families, and school district folks will miss the humor, caring and wisdom she brought to her job each day. Betsy worked for Outreach twice. After working in the vision field in California for almost 30 years, Betsy moved to WA and worked for Outreach in the Monroe area for two years. Betsy worked for WSSB again this past year and we were so glad to have her back. What does Betsy want to do now? Take a while to relax, clean house and just slow down! We all wish you the best and much happiness.

We have a new teacher on our staff for the 2006-07 school year. Kathryn Kier will be working half time for Outreach in the Skagit Valley. Like Betsy, Kathryn is originally from California and met her husband at a camp for blind children in Napa. Kathryn and her family have lived on Orcas Island for the past 11 years. While working as a Para-professional on Orcas, Kathryn had the opportunity and privilege to work with a blind student and found she enjoyed this challenging experience immensely. She recently earned a Masters' degree in the education of blind children and orientation and mobility from the University of Northern Colorado. Welcome aboard Kathryn!

WSSB Celebrates Employee and Team of the Year

Each year, WSSB employees are invited to submit nominations for both Employee and Team of the Year. This year, Jennifer Hervey was chosen as **Employee of the Year**. Jennifer began her service with WSSB in 1996. One of her nominations read "This year's award should go to Jennifer Hervey for all of the time and effort she gives to put on plays and musicals, concerts, competitions, graduation ceremonies and just teaching her music and showing the public what a talented music teacher we have. She has made WSSB proud in both our community and the state. Jennifer's love for music and the student shows in everything she does. She has given countless hours over the years to WSSB and her program." **Congratulations Jennifer!**

This year's **Team of the Year** was awarded to our Outreach Team. This team received several nominations: "These folks are so dedicated to the districts and students they serve. Without exception, all districts served report extreme satisfaction with their work, great interaction with parents, the districts and district employees. They have great technical knowledge and really love the children and teams they work with." Another nomination read: "They work so hard to serve the students statewide in the districts. They drive long miles, work long hours and often have little contact with other people in their field." "They are what WSSB is all about. They have made the school proud going out there and working with students and district staff all over the state."



2006 Employee of the Year, Jennifer Hervey



2006 Team of the Year, Outreach



MEMBERSHIP INVITATION

By James Eccles, President, Former Students Association

Hello,

This invitation is going out to any and all current WSSB students who are not returning to WSSB next year, including those graduating and those returning for more schooling in their local school districts.

All students who have ever been students at WSSB for any length of time are eligible to join (once you are out of high school, whether that be here at WSSB or back at home at your local school) the WSSB Former Students Association. The alumni group is organized by former WSSB students.

Nowadays, the alumni association has a reunion meeting of all adults who were former students at the school, once every five years. These every five year get-togethers are held in June, on the first weekend following the last day of that school year in Vancouver on the WSSB campus.

Our next scheduled reunion weekend will be in June of 2009. During the spring of that year, the WSSB Former Students Association will send out an invitation letter inviting all former WSSB students on our mailing list to register for the convention and join all of us for a fun-filled friendship weekend.

If you would like to be on the mailing list to receive such an invitation, either in 2009, or in future years, as you get older and start wishing you could get together with old school friends and talk over old times, please call the WSSB Superintendent, Dr. Dean Stenehjem's, Administrative Assistant, Ms. Janet Merz, and give her your physical, snail-mail address for receiving such Former Students Association reunion invitation letters, every five years. Janet can be contacted at: 360-696-6321 ext. 120.

In addition, as alumni association President, I send out an occasional group-distribution e-mail message, when specific news of individual former students or important advocacy events on behalf of the school warrant.

If any among you would like to be added to my Former Students Association group-distribution list, simply send me a REQUEST e-mail at: jim.eccles@comcast.net then I will add your e-mail address to the list and send you a short acknowledgement/welcome message so that you will know that you are in the loop.

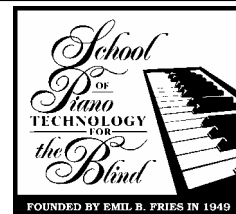
You might want to consider saving this INVITATION message somewhere permanent, in case you want to use it to join up, in say, 20 or 30 years, even though you might not be at all interested right now.

If and when you do call or write in, please remember to get one or two of your friends to do so also, to guarantee that there is someone you know and enjoy spending time with at each of these subsequent five-year June reunion weekends.

I look forward to seeing any among you in 2009, who decide to have your name put on the mailing list for your copy of that reunion invitation letter coming in 2009.

School of Piano Technology for the Blind

By Len Leger, Executive Director



Summer Workshop Planned:

The School of Piano Technology for the Blind, “Home of the Piano Hospital” is conducting the first annual Piano Technology Career Exploration Clinic on July 17-19, 2006 at 2510 E. Evergreen Blvd. in Vancouver, WA. The workshop is offered to blind and visually impaired people interested in pursuing a career in piano technology. It will consist of hands-on and classroom learning opportunities to enable the prospective piano technician to evaluate the personal skills and characteristics needed for success. Tuition for the Exploration Clinic is \$600 per person. A grant from the Gibney Family Foundation provides full scholarships for the first 8 people accepted into the clinic. Participants are responsible for their own housing, transportation, food and personal expenses. Housing is available at locations convenient to the school. Please call the school for more information.

Benefit Concert – A Big Success!

Thanks to everyone who supported the school’s first benefit concert held on June 1, 2006 in the Sherman Auditorium on the WSSB campus. Over 240 people heard Michael Allen Harrison perform a variety of musical genres from classical to show tunes to new compositions. A highlight of the night was his impromptu piano composition with surprise guest composer, Riley Crabtree, a student at WyEast Middle School. So far, the concert has raised over \$9,000 to benefit the scholarship fund. Thanks again for your support!

Don Donaldson Museum

By Chris Curatolo, Museum Committee Chair

The students’ Museum Club was proud to end this school year with a special celebration for Don Donaldson’s 95th birthday.

As our plans took shape, it was decided to make a lap quilt. The children worked for many weeks hand-sewing blocks together, which was a new experience for many and a learning experience for all. Some of Randi Smith’s Daily Living Skills students also participated, which was greatly appreciated!

The quilt contains pictures from Mr. Donaldson’s life, including his wife, Mildred, and son, David. The Club’s favorite picture is of Mr. Donaldson at age 18 months in tiny little dress shoes and a smock-dress. He was sure cute! The quilt was signed by as many staff and student’s of WSSB as possible, which in itself, took a number of weeks to complete. All students who worked on the quilt also put stars by their names.

Mr. Donaldson was invited to the last Museum Club meeting of the year and greatly enjoyed his surprise birthday party. He told some funny stories and the children had a fantastic time. On the serious side, Mr. Donaldson stressed that hard work is the only real means to achieve something meaningful in life. We need to have our dreams and set our goals, continually striving for the things in life which are really important to us without losing our compassion and respect for ourselves and others.

The students of the Museum Club are very proud of all their hard work, but more than everything, proud to be a part of WSSB history and proud of having Mr. Donaldson as a friend.

Writing My Autobiography Has Been a Blast Like Freshly Bottled Oregon Rain, It Is “Cool”

By Don Donaldson, Former Principal, WSSB

Long live the author. I'm that person and I'll soon be 100. I relish the thought since I have already slithered passed my 95th birthday and am as fit as a fiddle and as fine as the whiskers on a frog's chin.

Early ambition caused me to follow this motto: "Patient Preparation Produces Permanent Progress." My dear mother planted in my mind the value of education, and this was substantiated by wonderful teachers in the blind school who taught me Braille and expressed their heartfelt belief that I could achieve not only my independence but a high level of success in life. As I grew older, folks would say: "Don Donaldson Doesn't Dodge Disaster. He meets problems head-on and emerges triumphant." This was illustrated when I conceived an idea to sell brooms door-to-door during the Great Depression to earn college expenses.

In childhood, when I was only 7, I had gone from seeing to blindness, caused by the explosion of a dynamite cap. In youth, at age 21 through the miracle of surgery, I went from blindness to seeing and witnessed for the next sixty years an adventurous life; and from the many adventures a great 400-page autobiography, entitled WHAT'S IN A NAME, tumbled from my sharp, retentive memory. It was suggested from a letter written by WSSB Superintendent Dr. Dean Stenehjelm when I was living in Florida. He wrote: "Don, you've had such an unusual life you should write your autobiography." I promptly accepted his challenge.

I took the finished manuscript to the University of Washington Press. The Advisory Board declared: "Your book is inspirational, filled with rollicking humor and worthy of a national readership." A publisher in Indiana exceeded all expectations in the book's design, print of a size and style easily read and a good presentation of photos. The Washington Talking Book and Braille Library advertised WHAT'S IN A NAME over its radio system and recorded the work on Talking Book.

I discovered a special way of distribution. On my 92nd, 93rd and 94th birthdays I went on cruises to Alaska and by sternwheeler up and down the mighty Columbia River meeting shipmates from many states who appreciated my presence as an established author and who ordered my book. Also included were such faraway places as Alaska, Denmark and Canada. A couple in Montreal wanted the book printed in French. An Alaskan businessman ordered seven copies as gifts for employees of the Polar Construction and Mining Company; and the Denmark order came from a retired colonel in the United Nations Peace Keeping Force. Then a letter arrived from the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra which stated that WHAT'S IN A NAME had reached them for their February 2006 Fund Raising Auction and had played a significant part in raising \$46,000.

One of my aims has been to have copies of my book in all the public libraries in the states of Washington and Oregon. I believe I have successfully accomplished that, be the libraries big or small. I am also placing my book in various college and university libraries. The idea originated by the famous solar scientist, Dr. Harold Hay in Los Angeles, who purchased copies of WHAT'S IN A NAME to donate to Stanford, USC, UCLA, San Diego State and the Los Angeles Public Library. So far I have sent packets containing gift books to colleges in Vancouver, Bellingham, Seattle, Ellensburg, Cheney, Pullman, Salem, Portland, Cambridge, Massachusetts (Harvard where I did graduate study) and Winona, Minnesota (where I was born).

Now, Dear Reader, before you go to bed and close your precious eyes, harken to these words: *Please go buy my book!* It is a good read that will bring you inspiration, wisdom and hope. What is more, you'll feel as if you are having a ball, just knowing that the copy you buy benefits the boys and girls at the Washington State School for the Blind.

Washington State School for the Blind - Upcoming Events

August	New Employee Orientation	August 22
	Educational Reform Workshop (Teacher's only)	August 23
	Safety Training/Fall Workshop	August 23-25
September	Labor Day	September 4
	Student Registration (no transportation)	September 10
	First Day of School	September 11
	"Welcome Students" Ice Cream Social	September 21
	Board of Trustees Meeting	September 22-23
October	National White Cane Awareness Day	October 14
	Open House	October 19
November	NFB Fall Convention	November 3-5
	End of 1 st Quarter	November 9
	Veterans Day Holiday (observed)	November 10
	Washington Council of the Blind Convention	November 9-11
	Thanksgiving Holiday	November 23-24
December	Board of Trustees Meeting	December 1-2 (Olympia)
	Tree Decorating	December 5
	Winter Holiday Program	December 20

The Lions Roar is produced 3 times per year at the Washington State School for the Blind, 2214 East 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661-4120. Phone 360-696-6321 Fax 360-737-2120



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UPDATE: Thanks to the great response from our newsletter readers, WSSB will save over \$675.00 per year in printing and mailing costs by e-mailing our newsletters to those who have requested it! Thank you!!!